



JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY CABINET

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GOVERNOR

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JUSTICE MARY C. NOBLE, RET.
SECRETARY

May 14, 2020

Dear Families and Friends of the Justice-Involved Population:

The Justice Cabinet, especially the Department of Corrections, recognizes that these are challenging times for everyone, and that your concern for your loved one who is incarcerated is valid, as are the fears everyone has related to COVID-19 (coronavirus). This is an unprecedented situation, but our commitment remains unchanged: we are working diligently to protect the justice-involved population, as well as correction personnel.

I am aware that there are many questions and rumors about what we are doing to fight the spread of the coronavirus. Information concerning this outbreak is changing rapidly, and we are making adjustments to minimize risks and protect the incarcerated population. We have been taking multiple protective steps for several weeks now, and we add additional measures as new issues arise.

First, the Department of Corrections developed a quarantine and medical isolation plan for symptomatic and exposed individuals. This varies somewhat across the 13 institutions in our system based on the design of the buildings, but all have established quarantine units. DOC works closely with local Health Departments and our in-house medical teams to screen for symptoms and to perform testing and follow-up care. When inmates require more extensive care, they are taken to local hospitals.

Next, every institution is taking the following steps:

- Suspended visitation and other non-essential outside contact.
- Suspended transfers between institutions with the exception of an operational or medical emergency.
- Quarantining new inmates received at an institution for 14 days before they enter the general population.
- Sanitizing facilities with a germicide and bleach solution several times daily.
- Providing staff with alcohol-based hand sanitizer and the inmates with extra soap for handwashing, while also educating on the CDC guidance for mitigating the spread of germs.

- Screening staff for symptoms every day upon entry, including temperature checks. Sanitizing staff shoes with spray or use of a sanitizing tray. Requiring staff to wear masks and gloves at all times.
- Cloth masks have been distributed to all inmates. Masks are required to be worn outside the cell at all times.
- Screening and testing staff at a drive-through testing site outside the facility if staff thinks they may have COVID symptoms.
- Providing inmates with one free phone call and two free messages via a secure electronic mail system per week.
- Requiring social distancing, to every extent possible at all facilities; modifying routine movement throughout the buildings to allow for better social distancing.

To date, only inmates at Green River Correctional Complex (“GRCC”) have tested positive for COVID. The Governor ordered mass testing at GRCC which included all staff and the entire inmate population. Testing was completed on Friday, May 1st and results can be found on the Department of Corrections COVID-19 webpage @ <https://corrections.ky.gov/facilities/pages/covid19.aspx>. The emergency contact listed for the inmate was notified if the individual tested positive. The Department of Corrections in consultation with the Department for Public Health will determine if further testing is needed at the prison.

Based on the test results, the entire prison population has been separated into distinct housing areas: 1) positive inmates, 2) negative inmates with direct exposure, 3) negative inmates with no direct exposure, and 4) medically vulnerable inmates. This movement included a sanitization of the cell and the inmate’s property. Medical staff visit each dorm daily to monitor conditions and administer medications. Inmates are encouraged to have temperature checks and address any other medical concerns at that time.

There is only one other state prison in Kentucky at this time with any positive cases and that is Roederer Correctional Complex. We have had two positive staff cases and one positive inmate. However, the inmate who tested positive subsequently tested negative twice. As a result, we believe that the first, positive was a false positive. Large scale testing was conducted due to the open bay concept of the prison and based on contact tracing. All subsequent test results were negative.

Governor Beshear will continue to announce decisions concerning Correctional Facilities at his daily press briefing. DOC will then include that information on their [website](#) and social media (@KYCorrections). Overall, the best source of information is [Kentucky’s COVID-19 website](#), which I encourage you to check frequently. There are also phone numbers included at the end of this letter for our DOC facilities where you may call to ask questions about our COVID-19 efforts or about your loved ones.

Our dedicated corrections staff are working every day to maintain health and safety in our institutions. I understand how difficult it is not to see your loved ones, but your sacrifices are helping to decrease the spread of COVID. I ask that we all join to flatten the curve on this dreadful disease.

As Governor Beshear reminds us daily: We will get through this. We will get through this, together.

Sincerely,

Mary C. Noble
Secretary, Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet



For general information regarding DOC's COVID-19 preparedness, please call 502-782-2285.

For COVID-19 medical-related questions regarding a specific inmates, please call:

- Western Region: 502-930-6951
(Kentucky State Penitentiary, Western Kentucky Correctional Complex, Green River Correctional Complex, and Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women)
- Central Region: 502-718-6743
(Roederer Correctional Complex, Luther Luckett Correctional Complex, Kentucky State Reformatory, and Blackburn Correctional Complex)
- Eastern Region: 502-510-20990
(Bell County Forestry Camp, Northpoint Training Center, Lee Adjustment Center, Little Sandy Correctional Complex, and Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex)